

Ernie Fletcher
Governor



W. James Host
Secretary, Commerce Cabinet

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Kent Whitworth, Executive Director

"Unfinished Business: School Desegregation in Kentucky"
Panelists Biographies
March 30, 2004

Aukram Burton

Burton is a Diversity and Multicultural Education Specialist in Jefferson County Public Schools' Department of Equity and Poverty Issues. His experience includes working as a high school teacher and administrator for ten years in Boston Public Schools in Massachusetts, and as Director of Minority Student Achievement for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina.

Benitha Ellis

Ellis was a founding member and leader of the United Black Protective Parents organization that formed in 1975 in Jefferson County in order to focus attention on the treatment of black children on the buses and in the classrooms. Members took their concerns to state and federal political leaders, the Jefferson County Board of Education, and federal court in addition to helping children at bus stops and in the schools.

James Howard

In 1956 at the age of 13, Howard was one of nine black students who attempted to integrate the all-white Sturgis High School. White resistance became violent and the National Guard was called in. It would be another year before the school was integrated. Howard graduated from Sturgis in 1960 and later graduated from Oklahoma State University. He is currently the executive director of the state agency in Oklahoma that conducts administrative hearing, arbitration, and mediation for over 30,000 state employees.

Suzy Post

A lifelong advocate for equity issues, Post was President of the ACLU of Kentucky that filed the lawsuit which resulted in a 1975 busing plan to desegregate Jefferson County and Louisville schools. She was the only white plaintiff in the suit and had five children in public schools at that time. She was monitor of the lawsuit after 1975 while employed by the Louisville and Jefferson County Human Relations Commission.

Jim St. Clair

St. Clair is a professor of journalism at Indiana University Southeast. He is co-author of the book "Chief Justice Fred. M. Vinson of Kentucky, A Political Biography."

Renee Scott

As program manager for the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Exceptional Children Services, Scott's varied responsibilities include serving on the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board and as co-principal investigator for the Kentucky State Improvement Grant. One of her recent publications addressed the disproportionate representation of students of color in special education.

Gerald Smith

Smith is an associate professor of African American history and director of the African American Studies and Research Program at the University of Kentucky. He has published two books on African American life in Kentucky and is currently writing "A Concise History of the African American Experience in Kentucky."

Louis Stout

Stout graduated from Cynthiana High School, an all black school, in 1959. He attended St. Regis College in Denver Colorado on a basketball scholarship returning to Kentucky to teach and coach at Dunbar High School

in Lexington in 1965. Dunbar closed in 1967 and Stout became a teacher and assistant coach (later head coach) at Tates Creek High School in Lexington. In 1994, Stout was named commissioner of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, the first African American in the nation to head up a state high school athletic association.

Doris Wilkinson

Wilkinson, a graduate of Dunbar High School in Lexington, was a member of the freshman class of African Americans that entered the University of Kentucky in 1954. She completed her undergraduate training in 3 ½ years and went on to Case Western Reserve University where she received her M.A. and PhD. In 1967, Wilkinson was the first African American woman to be hired as a full-time regular faculty member at the University of Kentucky.